

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

NO. 210. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1872.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

WILLING TO DIE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE ROSE AND THE KEY."

CHAPTER XXIV. ARRIVALS.

LAURA had not waited any longer than I for a special justification of a letter. She had nothing to say, and she said it in a letter as long as my own, which reached me at breakfast next morning.

Sitting in a spacious room, looking out into a quiet fashionable street, in a house all of whose decorations and arrangements had an air of cold elegance and newness, the letter with the friendly Cardyllion post-mark on it seemed to bring with it something of the clear air, the homely comfort, and free life of Malory, and made me yearn all the more for the kind faces, the old house, and beloved scenery I had left behind.

It was insufferably dull here, and I soon found myself in that state which is described as not knowing what to do with oneself.

For two days no further letter from Laura reached me. On the third, I saw her well-known handwriting on the letter that awaited me on the breakfast-table. As I looked, as people will, at the direction before opening the envelope, I was struck by the post-mark, "Liverpool," and turning it over and over, I nowhere saw Cardyllion.

I began to grow too uncomfortable to wait longer; I opened the letter with misgivings. At the top of the note there was nothing written but the day of the week. It said:

MY DEAREST ETHEL,—A sudden and total change in my unhappy circumstances, separates me from you. It is impossible that I should go to London now; and it is

possible that I may not see you again for a long time, if ever. I write to say farewell; and in doing so to solemnly repeat my warning against permitting the person who obtained a few days' shelter in the steward's house, after the shipwreck, to maintain even the slightest correspondence or acquaintance with you. Pray, dearest Ethel, trust me in this. I implore of you to follow my advice. You may hear from me soon again. In the mean time, I am sure you will be glad to know that your poor governess is happy; happier than she ever desired, or ever hoped to be. My fond love is always yours, and my thoughts are hourly with you.

Ever your loving

LAURA GREY.

May God for ever bless you, darling! Good-bye.

I don't think I could easily exaggerate the effect of this letter. I will not weary you with that most tiresome of all relations, an account of another person's grief.

Mamma and papa arrived that evening. If I had lived less at Malory, and more with mamma, I should not, in some points, have appreciated her so highly. When I saw her, for the first time, after a short absence, I was always struck by her beauty and her elegance, and it seemed to me that she was taller than I recollected her.

She was looking very well, and so young!

I saw papa but for a moment. He went to his room immediately to dress, and then went off to his club.

Mamma took me to her room, where we had tea. She said I had grown, and was very much pleased with my looks. Then she told me all her plans about me. I was to have masters, and I was not to come out till April.

She then got me to relate all the circumstances of Nelly's death, and cried a good deal. Then she had in her maid Lexley, and they held a council together over me on the subject of dress.

My Malory wardrobe, from which I had brought up to town with me what I considered an unexceptionable selection, was not laughed at, was not even discussed; it was simply treated as non-extant. It gave me a profound sense of the barbarism in which I had lived.

Laura Grey's letter lay heavy at my heart, but I had not yet mentioned it to mamma. There was no need, however, to screw my courage to that point. Among the letters brought up to her was one from Laura.

When she read it she was angry in her querulous way. She threw herself into a chair in a pet. She had confidence in Laura Grey, and foresaw a good deal of trouble to herself in this desertion. "I am so particularly unfortunate!" she began; "everything that can possibly go wrong! everything that never happens to any one else! I could have got her to take you to Monsieur Pontet's, and your drives, and to shop—and—she must be a most unprincipled person. She had no right to go away as she has done. It is too bad! Your papa allows every one of that kind to treat me exactly as they please, and really, when I am at home, my life is one continual misery! What am I to do now? I don't believe any one else was ever so entirely at the mercy of her servants. I don't know, my dear, how I can possibly do all that is to be done for you without assistance; and *there* was a person I thought I could depend upon. A total stranger I should not like; and really, for anything I can see at present, I think you must go back again to Malory, and do the best you can. I am not a strong person. I was not made for all this, and I really feel I could just go to my bed, and cry till morning."

My heart had been very full, and I was relieved by this opportunity of crying.

"I wonder at your crying about so good-for-nothing a person," exclaimed mamma, impatiently. "If she had cared the least about you, she could not have left you as she has done. A satisfactory person, certainly, that young lady has turned out!"

Notwithstanding all this, mamma got over her troubles, and engaged a dull and even-tempered lady, named Anna Maria Pounden, whose manners were quiet and unexceptionable, and whose years were about

fifty. She was not much of a companion for me, you may suppose. She answered, however, very well for all purposes intended by mamma. She was lady-like and kind, and seemed made for keeping keys, arranging drawers, packing boxes, and taking care of people when they were ill. She spoke French, besides, fluently, and with a good accent, and mamma insisted that she and I should always talk in that language.

All the more persistently for this change, my thoughts were with my beloved friend, Laura Grey.

From Malory, Rebecca Torkill told me, in a rather incoherent letter, the particulars of Laura Grey's departure from Malory. She had gone out for a walk, leaving her things half-packed, for she was to go from Malory next day.

She did not return; but a note reached Mrs. Torkill, next morning, telling her simply that she could not return; and that she would write to mamma and to me in London, the same day. Mrs. Torkill's note, like mine, had the Liverpool post-mark; and her conjecture was thus expressed: "I don't think, miss, she had no notions to leave that way when she went out. It must to have bin something sudding. She went fest, I do sepose to olyhed, and thens to Liverpool in one off them pakkats. Mr. Williams, the town-clerk, and the vicar and his lady, and Doctor Mervyn is all certing sure it could be no other wise."

Mamma did not often come down to breakfast, during her short stay at this unseasonable time of year in town. On one of those rare occasions, however, something took place that I must describe.

Mamma was in a pretty morning negligée, as we used to call such careless dresses then, looking as delicately pretty as the old china tea-cups before her. Papa was looking almost as perplexingly young as she, and I made up the little party to the number of the Graces.

Mamma must have been forty, and I really don't think she looked more than two-and-thirty. Papa looked about five-and-thirty; and I think he must have been at least ten years older than he looked. That kind of life that is supposed to wear people out, seemed for them to have had an influence like the elixir vitæ; and I certainly have seen rustics, in the full enjoyment of mountain breezes, simple fare, and early hours, look many a day older than their years. The old rule, so harped upon, that "early to bed and early to rise" is the secret of perpetual youth, I don't

dispute; but then, if it be early to go to bed at sunset in winter, say four in the evening, and to rise at four in the morning, is it not still earlier to anticipate that hour, and go to bed at four in the morning and get up at one in the afternoon? At all events, I know that this mode of life seemed to agree with papa and mamma. I don't think, indeed, that either suffered much from the cares that poison enjoyment, and break down strength. Mamma threw all hers unexamined upon papa; who threw all his with equal nonchalance upon Mr. Norman, a kind of factotum, secretary, comptroller, diplomatist, financier, and every other thing that comes within the words "making oneself generally useful."

I never knew exactly what papa had a year to live upon. Mamma had money also. But they were utterly unfit to manage their own affairs, and I don't think they ever tried.

Papa had his worries now and then; but they seldom seemed to last more than a day, or at most a week or two. There were a number of what he thought small sums, varying from two to five thousand pounds, which under old settlements dropped in opportunely, and extricated him. These sums ought to have been treated not as income, but as capital, as I heard a monied man of business say long after; but papa had not the talent of growing rich, or even of continuing rich, if a good fairy had gifted him with fortune.

Papa was in a reverie, leaning back in his chair; mamma yawned over a letter she was reading; I was drumming some dance music with my fingers on my knee under the table-cloth, when suddenly he said to mamma:

"You don't love your Aunt Lorrimer very much?"

"No; I don't love her; I never said I did, did I?"

"No; but I mean, you don't like her; you don't care about her?"

"No," said mamma, languidly, and looking wonderingly at him with her large pretty eyes. "I don't very much; I don't quite know; I have an affection for her."

"You don't love her, and you don't even like her, but you have an affection for her," laughed papa.

"You are so teasing! I did not say that; what I mean is, she has a great many faults and oddities, and I don't like them; but I have an affection for her; why should it seem so odd to you, that one should care

for one's relations? I do feel that for her, and there let it rest."

"Well, but it ought not to rest there—as you do like her."

"Why, dear—have you heard anything of her?"

"No; but there is one thing I should not object to hear about her just now."

"One thing? What do you mean, dear?"

"That she had died, and left us her money. I know what a brute I am, and how shocked you are; but I assure you we rather want it at this moment. You write to her, don't you?"

"N-not very often. Once since we saw her at Naples."

"Well, that certainly is not very often," he laughed. "But she writes to you; you thought she seemed rather to like us—I mean you?"

"Yes."

"She has no one else to care about that I know of. I don't pretend to care about her; I think her an old fool."

"She isn't that, dear," said mamma, quietly.

"I wish we knew where she is now; seriously, you ought to write to her a little oftener, dear; I wish you would."

"I'll write to her, certainly, as soon as I am a little more myself. I could not do it just to-day; I have not been very well, you know."

"Oh! my darling, I did not mean to hurry you; of course not, till you feel perfectly well; don't suppose I could be such a monster; but—I don't want, of course, to pursue her—but there is a middle course between that, and having to drop her. She really has no one else, poor old thing, to care about, or to care about her; not that I care about her, but you're her kinswoman, and I don't see why——"

At this moment the door opened, and there entered, with the air of an assumed intimacy, and a certain welcome, a person whom I little expected to see there. I saw him with a shock. It was the man with the fine eyes and great forehead, the energetic gait, and narrow shoulders. The grim, mean-looking, intelligent, agreeable man of fifty, Mr. Droquville.

CHAPTER XXV. THE DOCTOR'S NEWS.

"Oh! how do you do, Doctor Droquville?" said mamma, with a very real welcome in looks and accent.

"How d'ye do, Droquville?" said my father, a little dryly, I fancied.

"Have you had your breakfast?" asked mamma.

"Two hours ago."

"We are very late here," said papa.

"I should prefer thinking I am very early, in my primitive quarters," answered Mr. Droquille.

"I had not an idea we should have found you in town, just now."

"In season or out of season, a physician should always be at his post. I'm beginning to learn rather late there's some truth in that old proverb about moss, you know, and rolling-stones, and it costs even a bachelor something to keep body and soul together in this mercenary, tailoring, outlet-eating world." At this moment he saw me, and made me a bow.

"Miss Ware?" he said, a little inquiringly to mamma. "Yes, I knew perfectly it was the young lady I had seen at Malory. Some faces are not easily forgotten," he added gallantly, with a glance at me. "I threatened to run away with her, but she was firm as fate," he smiled and went on, "and I paid a visit to our friend Carmel, you know."

"And how did you think he was?" she asked, and I listened with interest for the answer.

"He's the consumptive; he's at this side of the Styx, it is true; but his foot is in the water, and Charon's obolus is always between his finger and thumb. He'll die young. He may live five years, it is true. But he's not likely to live two. And if he happens to take cold and begins to cough, he might not last four months."

"My wife has been complaining," said papa; "I wish you could do something for her. You still believe in Doctor Droquille? I think she half believes you have taken a degree in divinity as well as in medicine; if so, a miracle, now and then, would be quite in your way."

"But, I assure you, Doctor Droquille, I never said any such thing; it was you who thought," she said to my father, "that Doctor Droquille was in orders."

Droquille laughed.

"But, Doctor Droquille, I think," said mamma, "you would have made a very good priest."

"There are good priests, madame, of various types; Madame de Genlis, for instance, commends an abbé of her acquaintance; he was a most respectable man, she says, and never ridiculed revealed religion but with moderation."

Papa laughed, but I could see that he

did not like Doctor Droquille. There was something dry, and a little suspicious in his manner, so slight that you could hardly define it, but which contrasted strikingly with the decision and insouciance of Doctor Droquille's talk.

"But, you know, you never do that, even with moderation; and you can argue so closely, when you please."

"There, madame, you do me too much honour; I am the worst logician in the world. I wrote a part of an essay on Christian chivalry, and did pretty well, till I began to reason; the essay ended, and I was swallowed up in this argument—pray listen to it. To sacrifice your life for the lady you adore is a high degree of heroism. But to sacrifice your soul for her is the highest degree of heroism; but the highest degree of heroism is but another name for Christianity; and, therefore, to act thus can't sacrifice your soul; and if it doesn't you don't practise a heroism, and therefore no Christianity; and, therefore, you do sacrifice your soul; but if you do sacrifice your soul, it is the highest heroism—therefore Christianity; and, therefore, you don't sacrifice your soul, and so, *da capo*, it goes on for ever; and, I can't extricate myself. When I mean to make a boat, I make a net; and this argument that I invented to carry me some little way on my voyage to truth, not only won't hold water, but has caught me by the foot, entangles, and drowns me. I never went on with my essay."

In this cynical trifling there was a contemptuous jocularly quite apparent to me, although mamma took it all in good faith, and said, "It is very puzzling, but it can't be true; and I should think it almost a duty to find out where it is wrong."

Papa laughed, and said:

"My dear, don't you see that Doctor Droquille is mystifying us?"

I was rather glad, for I did not like it. I was vexed for mamma; Doctor Droquille's talk seemed to me an insolence.

"It is quite true, I am no logician; I had better continue as I am; I make a tolerable physician; if I became a preacher, with my defective ratiocination, I should inevitably lose myself and my audience in a labyrinth. You make but a very short stay in town, I suppose?" he broke off suddenly; "it isn't tempting, so many houses sealed—a city of the dead. One does not like, madame, as your Doctor Johnson said to Mrs. Thrale, to come down to vacuity."

"Well, it is only a visit of two or three days; my daughter Ethel is coming out

next spring, and she came up to meet us here. I wish her to have a few weeks with masters, and there are more things to be thought of than you would suppose. Do you think there is anything a country miss would do well to read up that we might have forgotten?"

"Read? read? Oh! yes, two things."

"What are they?"

"If she has a sound knowledge of the heathen mythology, and a smattering of the Bible, she'll do very well."

"But she won't talk about the Bible," laughed papa; "people who like it, read it to themselves."

"Very true," said Doctor Droqville, "you never mention it; but, quite unconsciously, you are perpetually alluding to it; nothing strikes a stranger more, if he understands your language as I do. You had a note from Lady Lorrimer?"

"No," said mamma.

The word "note," I think, struck papa as implying that she was nearer than letter-writing distance, and he glanced quickly at Doctor Droqville.

"And where is Lady Lorrimer now?" asked papa.

"That is what I came to tell you. She is at Mivart's. I told her you were in town, and I fancied you would have had a note from her; but I thought I might as well look in and tell you."

"She's quite well, I hope?" said mamma.

"Now did you ever, Mrs. Ware, in all your life, see her quite well? I never did. She would lose all pleasure in life if she thought she wasn't leaving it. She arrived last night, and summoned me to her at ten this morning. I felt her pulse. It was horribly regular. She had slept well, and breakfasted well, but that was all. In short, I found her suffering under her usual chronic attack of good health, and, as the case was not to be trifled with, I ordered her instantly some medicine which could not possibly produce any effect whatever, and in that critical state I left her, with a promise to look in again in the afternoon to ascertain that the more robust symptoms were not gaining ground, and in the interval I came to see you and tell you all about it."

"I suppose, then, I should find her in her bed?" said mamma.

"No; I rather think she has postponed dying till after dinner—she ordered a very good one—and means to expire in her sitting-room, where you'll find her. And you have not been very well?"

"Remember the story he has just told you of your Aunt Lorrimer, and take care he doesn't tell her the same story of you," said papa, laughing.

"I wish I could," said Doctor Droqville; "few things would please me better. That pain in the nerves of the head is a very real torment."

So he and mamma talked over her headaches in an undertone for some minutes, and while this was going on there came in a note for mamma. The servant was waiting for an answer in the hall.

"Shall I read it?" said papa, holding it up by the corner. "It is Lady Lorrimer's, I'm sure."

"Do, dear," said mamma, and she continued her confidences in Doctor Droqville's ear.

Papa smiled a little satirically as he read it. He threw it across the table, saying:

"You can read it, Ethel; it concerns you rather."

I was very curious. The hand was youthful and pretty, considering Lady Lorrimer's years. It was a whimpering, apathetic, selfish little note. She was miserable, she said, and had quite made up her mind that she could not exist in London smoke. She had sent for the doctor.

She continued: "I shall make an effort to see you, if you can look in at about three, for a few minutes. Have you any of your children with you? If they are very quiet I should like to see them. It would amuse me. It is an age since I saw your little people, and I really forget their ages, and even their names. Say if I am to expect you at three. I have told the servant to wait."

People who live in the country fancy themselves of more importance than they really are. I was mortified, and almost shocked at her cool sentences about "the little people," &c.

"Well, you promise to be very quiet, won't you? You won't pull the cat's tail, or light paper in the fire, or roar for plum-cake?" said papa.

"I don't think she wants to see us. I don't think she cares the least about us; perhaps mamma won't go," I said, resentfully, hoping that she would not pay that homage to the insolent old woman.

Doctor Droqville stood up, having written a prescription.

"Well, I'm off; and I think this will do you a world of good. Can I do any commissions for you about town; I shall be in

every possible direction in the next three hours?"

No; there was nothing; and this man, whom I somehow liked less than ever, although he rather amused me, vanished, and we saw his cab drive by the window.

"Well, here's her note. You'll go to see her, I suppose?" said papa.

"Certainly; I have a great affection for my aunt. She was very kind to me when there was no one else to care about me."

Mamma spoke with more animation than I believed her capable of; I thought I even saw tears in her eyes. It struck me that she did not like papa's tone in speaking about her. The same thing probably struck him.

"You are quite right, darling, as you always are in a matter of feeling; and you'll take Ethel, won't you?"

"Yes, I should like her to come."

"And you know if she should ask you, don't tell her I'm a bit better off than I really am. I have had some awful losses lately; I don't like bothering you about business, and it was no fault or negligence of mine; but I really—it is of very great importance she should not do anything less than she intended for you, or anything whimsical or unjust. I give you my honour there isn't a guinea to spare now; it would be a positive cruelty."

Mamma looked at him; but she was by this time so accustomed to alarms of that kind that they did not make a very deep impression upon her.

"I don't think she's likely to talk about such matters, dear," said mamma; "but if she should make any inquiries, I shall certainly tell her the truth."

I remembered Lady Lorrimer long ago at Malory. It was a figure seen in the haze of infancy, and remembered through the distance of many years. I recollect coming down the stairs, the nursery-maid holding me by the hand, and seeing a carriage and servants in the court before the door. I remember, as part of the same dream, sitting in the lap of a strange lady in the drawing-room, who left a vague impression of having been richly dressed, who talked to me in a sweet, gentle voice, and gave me toys, and whom I always knew to have been Lady Lorrimer. How much of this I actually saw, and how much was picked up with the vivid power of reproducing pictures from description that belongs to children, I cannot say; but I always heard of Aunt Lorrimer afterwards

with interest; and now at length I was about to see her. Her note had disappointed me; still I was curious.

ALL THE WORLD A VILLAGE.

WHAT would the ghost of Captain James Cook, or that of Admiral Anson, or of any other great circumnavigator, say to the following advertisement, which has appeared simultaneously in San Francisco, New York, and London?

Round the World in Eighty-one Days for Eleven Hundred and Forty-five Dollars in Gold (2291 sterling). From San Francisco to Yokohama, 4700 miles; from Yokohama to Hong Kong, 1600 miles; from Hong Kong to Calcutta, 3500 miles; from Calcutta to Bombay, 1400 miles; from Bombay to Suez, 3600 miles; from Suez to Alexandria, 225 miles; from Alexandria to Brindisi, 850 miles; from Brindisi to London, 1200 miles; from London to New York, 3200 miles; from New York to San Francisco, 3294 miles.

This announcement is a veritable sign of the times and of the restless activity of the race. Nobody thinks it much of an achievement in our day to circumnavigate the globe. English and American merchants and manufacturers make the grand tour in the way of their business, and look upon it as a matter of course. And not only the young, but the old make the circle, that would have appalled their grandfathers. Mr. Seward, late Secretary of State for the American Union, made the trip at the ripe age of seventy, and having died at the riper age of seventy-two, has left the world the recital of what he saw, heard, and did, during the journey. A hale old friend of mine, who is upwards of seventy-five years of age, started from London, a few months ago, to New York and San Francisco, intending to proceed from San Francisco to India, China, Australia, and New Zealand, and thought little more of it than if he were going to the Highlands of Scotland for his autumnal holiday. Doubtless he will return all right, for he has pluck enough for anything, and, barring accident or shipwreck, it is very likely that he will accomplish the feat, which he has undertaken from pure love of adventure, or the desire of change and occupation. The late Mr. Anson Burlingame, who was appointed ambassador from the United States to China, and reappointed ambassador by China to his own country and to all the great powers in Europe, declared that he never knew how little the world was until he had sailed round it. "In fact," said he, "I have learned to look

upon the world as no more than a good-sized village."

Distance and remoteness have become traditions of the past, and the imagination of the man who can correspond, by the electric cable, with New York, San Francisco, or Canton, and receive an answer in an hour or two, or perhaps in a few minutes, needs no great prompting to look upon those places as within easy reach of his foot, if it be his pleasure to visit them. The consequences of this neighbourhood of once widely-separated lands are defining themselves more distinctly every day, and threaten, perhaps it should be said promise, to assimilate the costume, the manners, and to a partial extent the language of all the nations of the world. Time was when the traveller, who strayed no further afield than to the Continent of Europe, would refresh his eyes by the study of many picturesque varieties of national costume. In Belgium, in Holland, in Germany, in Italy, in Switzerland, in Brittany, in the South of France, in Spain, he found not only a change of scene, language, and manner, but a change in the attire of men and women, which pleased him by its novelty, as well as by its beauty. There was something very piquant and attractive in the Spanish mantilla, as worn by the dark-eyed Andalusians and Madrilenas. This garment is now rarely to be seen, though not many years ago it was as common in the streets of Brussels and Antwerp as in those of Madrid and Seville. The hideous chignon and the miserable apologies for head-gear which the ladies of England, France, and America delight to wear, have rendered the beautiful mantilla impossible. The peasant girls of the Swiss cantons, with their quaint petticoats, and their coquettish hats, have revolutionised their dress, and appear no longer in the coarse, but picturesque and serviceable attire of the olden time, but in the slatternly imitation of the tawdry dress affected by servant-girls who ape the style of their mistresses. All the Christian nations of the world dress pretty nearly alike, and the Orientals are beginning to follow suit.

Not the least curious incident of the approximation of the peoples, which steam and the electric wire have brought about, is the awakening of the sluggish Oriental mind to a knowledge of the fact that there is a Western as well as an Eastern civilisation, and that the former is in many respects worthy of imitation and cultivation. The Chinese and Japanese have begun to swarm

over their own border into other lands, and crossing the Pacific, have made a foot-hold in California and Oregon, to the great advantage of themselves and of those two states of the American Union. They are excellent mechanics, first-rate bakers and gardeners, and as laundresses and getters up of fine linen, they are unrivalled for neatness, punctuality, and cheapness. They also make admirable servants, and in a country like America, where domestic help is not only very costly but very independent and insolent, the economic, thrifty, painstaking, and industrious Chinese supply a pressing want so admirably, as to make the people of New York and New England, and other states on the Atlantic sea-board, very anxious for a similar visitation, to replace the lazy negroes and the saucy Irish, to whom they are almost exclusively beholden for domestic service. Perhaps, as the intercourse among the nations of the East and West becomes more frequent and more intimate, the Chinese and Japanese may find their way to Europe as well as to America, and act among us the sorely needed parts of respectful, economical, and capable servants.

And not only do the eastern potentates of China, Japan, Borneo, and Siam, send to England and Scotland for steam yachts, for railway iron, and for capable engineers to lay down their railroads; not only do they send envoys and ambassadors to report to them on their return the wonders they have seen, and the things to be avoided or imitated, in the example set them by the West; but they themselves begin to perceive the advantages of foreign travel. It was thought a daring innovation on ancient routine when first the Sultan of Turkey, the great Padishah himself, and after him the Khedive, or Viceroy of Egypt, visited England. Their example is about to be followed by a still more secluded and ancient potentate. No Sultan or Shah of Persia has ever been known to travel beyond the limits of that land of roses and romance; but the present Shah, inspired by the spirit of the age, and perhaps prompted by the knowledge of what has been done by his brother of Turkey, has resolved to visit Europe and to see for himself as much as sultans, shahs, kings, emperors, and other great potentates are permitted to see by the vigilant jealousy of those who surround them, or by the absurd etiquette with which they surround themselves. Doubtless he will return to the land of roses a wiser man, with ideas more enlarged and cosmo-

politan than he possessed when he started. Possibly the Mikado or the Tycoon may come next, or the Emperor of China, or that shadowy personage, the Grand Llama of Thibet.

There is but one part of the habitable globe—though a very large part it must be admitted—that is very closely shut against the trade and the ideas of Europe and America. China is not yet thoroughly open, but is opening; Central Asia is no longer the terra incognita that it was; but the interior of Africa, long hermetically sealed, will speedily have the light and air of Europe let into it. A little chink has been pierced in the wall by Doctor Livingstone and other ardent explorers. The chink will widen into a cleft, and the great mysterious door of the long-closed continent will be swung wide open, that all who will may enter. Then will another highway be added to the great village in which we all live, along which the busy wheels of the chariot of trade will rattle, bearing along with them the thought, the manners, and the material wealth of these restless times.

Will this constantly increasing intercourse, this stream of travel, this constant puff of the locomotive, this continual flashing of messages along the electric wire, over the land and under the ocean, produce, in the duly appointed course of time, a uniformity of religion and of language among all the peoples of the earth? If there is to be but one religion, none can doubt that that religion will be the Christian. If there is to be but one language, there can be as little doubt that the English has more chances in its favour than any other. French and German, widely extended though they are, do not force themselves over the globe in the train of emigration; and if they do travel on that mighty tide, are effaced in a generation or two by the more powerful English. Spanish bids fair to keep South America to itself; but North America, to be peopled at no distant day by a hundred or a hundred and fifty millions of souls, will continue to speak English. Australia, New Zealand, and the South African colonies, which, combined if not separately, will rival North America in population, will also speak English. In fact, English has already become the great cosmopolitan language of the world, which every nation begins to study. Language, as well as distance, has hitherto kept people strangers to each other. Strangeness has led to estrangement,

and estrangement, aided by ignorance and prejudice, has been the cause of wars innumerable, which might never have broken out if the peoples of the world had had the opportunities which they now possess of making acquaintance with each other. In view of the fact, however, that Germany is a vast camp, and that every man is compelled, nolens volens, to serve as a soldier during some of the best and most vigorous years of his life; that Russia keeps more than a million of men under arms; that Austria strives to keep as many; that France burns with the desire of revenge against her recent conqueror; and that the whole Continent, in fact, is little better than a vast parade ground for the evolutions of horse, foot, and artillery, it seems over sanguine, if not Utopian, to imagine that the day is perhaps not far distant when nations will cease to make war upon one another for so-called principles of nationality, or for enlarged frontier, or for petty offences against the self-esteem of a king or an ambassador, or for the crazy ambition of the head of a dynasty, who wishes to strengthen himself at home by picking a needless quarrel with some other potentate abroad. Nevertheless, no student of contemporary history, no clear-sighted traveller, no dispassionate observer of the world and its ways, can fail to perceive that the tendency of increased intercourse is towards peace. If there be violence, there is power enough latent somewhere to put a stop to it by the strong arm of the law; and if the whole world be but a village as regards proximity of man to man, or shop to shop, within its boundaries, it is not very unreasonable to hope and believe, that public opinion may ultimately become so strong, so decided, and so unanimous, as to declare a peace-breaker a public nuisance, and put him down accordingly.

EUROPEAN FABLES IN MALAYAN GARB.

AMONGST some recently published papers (Bijdragen) of a learned society at the Hague—the Royal Philological and Ethnological Institute of Netherlands-India—appears a short series of Malayan fables, which we propose to introduce to our readers in the course of the following pages. These fables—fifteen in all—are stated to be current amongst the Malay population of Padang, a Dutch settlement on the

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western coast of the island of Sumatra. They are assumed by the annotator, Doctor de Hollander, to be adaptations from European sources; although he admits his inability to discover when or how the transformation was effected. Their claims to notice he holds to be: First. The peculiarities of the dialect in which they are written, which includes several words not to be found in any existing Malay vocabulary. Second. The ingenuity with which the fancies of *Æsop* and *La Fontaine* have been clothed in Malayan garb. In respect of the first of these considerations, we would refer the reader to the paper itself,* which gives the Malay text in full, side by side with a Dutch translation. As regards the second, we may observe that the pretensions of Padang to the character of an European settlement do not go further back than the year 1838, or thereabouts; consequently, the fables in question may fairly be assumed to have obtained currency in that neighbourhood in the course of the last five-and-thirty years. Apart, therefore, from any amusement they may be calculated to afford, they furnish a good illustration of a fact which is frequently overlooked in the present day, to wit, that popular tales of this description have a tendency to propagate themselves, and to acquire a footing in new localities, under the concurrence of suitable conditions; and that, as in the organic world, the processes of dissemination and acclimatisation sometimes go on unheeded before our very eyes.† We give them as nearly as possible in the words of the original text, leaving our readers to form their own opinions respecting them.

The first in the series is entitled *The Two Cocks*. Once upon a time there lived two cocks, who were so outrageously noisy that their master was fain to turn them out to feed in a distant enclosure. Here they began fighting; and one of them was beaten, and lay lifeless in a corner. Whereupon the other cock flew up upon his roost, and crowed loudly in token of his victory. In the twinkling of an eye, down came a hawk, who had heard the noise while passing, and seized and bore off the victorious bird. The moral is an unexceptionable one. We should not think that blessings are designed for ourselves alone;

neither should we boast of our good fortune.

The next fable is our old friend of the *Fox and the Grapes* in a slightly altered form. It is called, *The Jackal and the Grapes*. A jackal was once suffering cruelly from hunger. In the course of his wanderings he found himself in the midst of a vineyard, where the grapes clustered over his head on a trellis-work of split bamboos. Seeing that the grapes looked ripe and tempting, he tried again and again to reach them, but in vain. At length, wearied with his efforts, he sat down exhausted. "Ah!" said he; "why should I trouble myself about them? They are sour; let those have them that like them." Moral: Envious people, when they find that with all their efforts they cannot attain the object they desire, disparage it, and pretend it is not worth the seeking.

Next we have the *Frog and Cow*. A cow grazing in a grassy plain, accidentally trod upon a frog, and killed him. Whereupon all the little frogs scuttled off to their homes. Said an old she-frog to her young ones, "Why have you come back?" And one of the young ones replied, "Oh, mother, we have just seen the biggest creature in the world." "How big was it?" said the mother; "describe it." "Oh, mother, we cannot tell you how big it was." And the mother was angry, and shut her mouth, and puffed herself out. "Was it as big as I am now, children?" "Indeed, mother, it was ever so much bigger," said the little ones. Once more the old frog swelled herself out. "Was it as big as I am now?" "Oh, mother, it was bigger still." And the old frog puffed and blew until she burst herself, and fell dead. Moral: Those who undertake what they are incompetent to perform must expect the fate of the frog in this tale.

The *Tiger and the Mosquito*. An enormous tiger was one day greatly annoyed by the droning of a mosquito in his ear. "Dirty little beast," said he, "be off to your own stinking pool, and don't trouble me, the lord of this great forest." Whereat the mosquito, very wrath, attacked the tiger forthwith, biting his lips, and eyes, and ears, so that he ran from cover to cover roaring with pain and annoyance. Extremely proud was the mosquito of his victory, deeming himself now the monarch of the forest; but, in his delight, he failed to observe a spider's web, against which he flew, and was caught and eaten by the spider in a trice. Moral: We must not

* *Bijdragen tot de Taal-land en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsche-Indië*, 3rd Volgreeks, 6th Deel, 2nd Stuk. Hague, 1872.

† As an example of a somewhat similar case, see certain of the aphorisms in Captain Burton's *Wit and Wisdom from West Africa*, which have undoubtedly been suggested by missionary teaching.

forget the instability of fortune. Great as we may be, disasters may befall us.

The Tiger and the Mouse. A mouse peeped forth from his hole, and a tiger clapped his paw upon him. Mousie squeaked, and begged for his life; and the tiger let him go. Shortly afterwards the same tiger was caught in a snare, from which he could not get free. The mouse, whose life he had spared, ran to his assistance, and gnawed the snare, so that it broke, and the tiger got away. Moral: Even so the humblest may be of service to the highest.

The Frog and the Mouse. A frog, who wanted to cross to the opposite bank of a river, met a mouse of his acquaintance and said, "Come with me to the opposite side." But the mouse said, "No; I would rather go round." "By no means," returned the frog; "we will go together—the shortest way." "All right," said the mouse; "as you please." "Well, then," continued the frog, "let me fasten one of your feet to one of mine, and I will tow you over." "Agreed," said the mouse. So the frog fastened one of his feet to one of the mouse's paws, and swam away with him into the stream. When they had got about half-way across, the mouse was exhausted, and, finding himself sinking, cried out, "Help, my friend, help! I am drowning . . . oh! treachery! I am lost; some one will repay you for your cruel deceit!" So saying he turned over and breathed his last. At that very moment a sparrow-hawk, passing by, saw something like a mouse upon the surface of the water, flew down, and carried it off, and the frog with it. Moral: Those who set traps for others sometimes get entrapped themselves.

The Herdboy and the Hunter. A herd-boy was tending some buffaloes on the skirts of a wood. Up came a hunter, saying, "Look you, boy; have you observed a deer anywhere about here? I have been in pursuit of one since dawn, and cannot get a shot at him." And the herdboy said, "I have just seen him enter yonder covert. If you will mind my cattle I will shoot him for you." "Done," rejoined the hunter; "you take my dog and gun, and I will look after the buffaloes." So the herd-boy went into the covert, and there stood the deer, feeding. He fired at him, and missed, and the deer got off clear. Presently the dog ran out to rejoin his master, and the boy followed, and found that the hunter had fallen asleep, and the buffaloes

had strayed out of sight. And sorely frightened he was lest his parents should know of it, and he should be beaten by his father for not having minded his own business. Moral: Every one has his own affairs to mind. We should not meddle with the concerns of others.

The Grasshopper and the Butterfly. A grasshopper sitting in the grass, saw a butterfly flitting about in a flower-garden, and thought to herself, "Ah, luckless me! Why have not I wings like a butterfly? I can never skim from flower to flower, but must sit here all the day long in the grass." Just at that moment a child came running out into the garden and caught the butterfly, plucked off its wings, and killed it. When the grasshopper saw that, she reflected, "Well, after all, I am better off than the butterfly. No one wants to catch me. It is best to be poor, for then no one notices you." Moral: Riches are to their possessors the source of many troubles and anxieties from which the poor are exempt.

The Mouse and the Elephant. Once upon a time an immense elephant was making a progress round a city with a magnificently arrayed princess seated on his back. And all the people turned out to look on in admiration. A mouse standing by said, "Oh, ye people, why look ye so at the elephant, with never so much as a glance at me? Ye gaze at the elephant because he is big and decked out bravely, but ye must know that I am quite as great a personage in my way." Just at that moment up came a cat and swallowed him, saying, "Ha, mousie, had you been as big as an elephant I could not have eaten you up." Moral: We should not comport ourselves arrogantly before our superiors.

The Greybeard and the Three Youngsters. An old man of eighty was one day planting some trees in his garden, and some young fellows coming by observed him. "Hallo, daddy," says one, "it is of no use for you to plant those trees, you will be dead and gone long before they bear fruit." "Don't be too sure," returned the old man, "life is uncertain. I may outlive all of you yet. At any rate, if I don't get the benefit of the trees, my grandchildren will." So the young men went their way. Very soon afterwards one went to sea and was lost; another went to the wars, and was shot dead; a third fell out of a palm-tree and was killed. So all three died, and the old man was yet alive. The moral of this fable is scarcely as apposite as most of the others; it is: We must not neglect

our duties to posterity whatever may be our age.

The Hawk and the Cock. A very knowing cock, whose cunning had worsted all his enemies, was sitting in his roost. A hawk came to him, saying: "Well, my friend, there is peace and friendship at last between your people and mine, and I, as the eldest representative of my nation, am deputed to bring the glad tidings; henceforth the fowls need no longer dread the hawks; enduring peace is now established, and the hawks and the poultry are like brothers for evermore. Pray come out of your roost, therefore, and help me to communicate the joyful intelligence." The cock listened from behind his grating to the hawk's tale, and replied: "My very good friend, I am rejoiced to hear the news. I know, from experience, that peace and friendship between your people and mine are infinitely to be preferred to strife and variance. But I observe yonder a couple of dogs coming this way, who evidently are the bearers of some intelligence of like import. We had better await their arrival, and so learn all the news at once." When the hawk heard of the dogs he was greatly alarmed. "My dear friend," said he, "not to-day, not to-day; I am very much behind my time already." So saying, he flew away, and right glad was the cock to see him depart. Moral: Specious as an enemy's counsels may appear, we should not follow them, as they will assuredly tend to our undoing.

The Mice and the Cat. In a certain town lived a certain cat, who was very nimble and expert in catching mice. One day, when the cat was away upon her rounds, the chief of the mice summoned a council of his people to consider how they might best defend themselves against the attacks of their enemy. Then out spoke a sage experienced mouse: "The best way would be to fasten a little bell to the cat's neck; we should then always have warning of her approach." And all the other mice said, "Admirable! we shall be delighted to adopt your suggestion." But when it came to the question of attaching the bell to the cat's neck, not a mouse would stir in the matter, each one thinking to himself, "I should get caught for my pains." Moral: Many people are ready to give advice, but few can be found to put the advice into practice.

The Monkey and the Mangosteen. A monkey found his way into a fruit-garden, and there beheld a mangosteen-tree loaded

with fruit. Up he climbs, plucks a mangosteen, and bites off a piece of the rind. Finding how bitter it was, he flung the fruit away, not knowing that it is the nature of the mangosteen to be bitter without and sweet within. Moral: When people meet with unknown objects they must not judge of them by externals.

The Two Travellers amongst the Mountains. Two travellers journeyed together amongst the mountains. And one of them invariably bewailed his fate when he went down-hill, but laughed aloud as he went up. His companion therefore asked him, "How is it that you cry out when the way is fair and smooth, but rejoice when it is hard and toilsome?" "When I go down-hill," said the other, "I remember that I shall have to go up again; when I go up, I know that ere long I shall be at the top, and then it will be all down-hill." Moral: In prosperity, we should not be over-confident—evil may overtake us; neither in ill-fortune should we be too much cast down; we should rather anticipate a change to better.

The Two Dogs. A hound, who was about to have young, besought a watch-dog of her acquaintance to grant her the use of his kennel for a short time. He acceded to the request, and the hound established herself in the kennel, and brought forth her young. After a lapse of some time, the watch-dog applied for the restoration of his kennel, but the hound begged hard to be allowed to remain there a little while longer. Some time afterwards, the watch-dog again renewed his application. "I am just expecting another litter," said the hound, "and you must wait until they too are grown up." At last, the watch-dog got very angry. "Let any one come in who dares," said the hound, "I will only be turned out by force;" for by this time her pups were all big enough and strong enough to side with their mother and take her part. So the watch-dog went sorrowfully away, bemoaning the ingratitude of his friend. Moral: Beware of evil-doers, and mistrust their professions, for no reliance can be placed on their words.

And here the series ends.

THE DEEP SEA FISHING.

Up with the flags, white, purple, and red,
Flutter them out from the tall mast-head,
Let the broad brown sail be bravely spread,
For wives and children must be fed
Though wintry winds wail wearily.
Though the great waves crash on the rocky shore,
Though the ominous foam on the sand lies hoar,
And over the reef where the breakers roar,
The sea-fret's wreathing drearily.

The mother bids her children pray
For him who sails for them far away ;
The widow shrinks from the light of day,
And shudders as cheering words they say,
For darkly the storm clouds gather.
And her one bold boy has gone with the rest,
Where the long lines toss on the billows' crest,
O'er the pitiless sea whose "wandering" breast,
Long years since took his father.

Up with the flag while the sail is set,
Labour and danger must needs be met,
For fire and bread are hard to get,
Better than hunger, or cold, or debt,
The squall o'er the wild waves sweeping.
Up with the flag and away to the goal,
Where for fathoms deep the blue seas roll,
Where the dog-fish dart round the herring shoal,
And the skate and the cod are leaping.

Up with the flag, there is money to make,
Where the sails in the fierce north-easter shake.
Look to gear and tackle, away, for the sake
Of the women at home, who will watch and wake,
In the town 'neath the tall cliffs lying.
God speed the brave hearts on their toil afar,
Till their boats come home 'neath the evening star,
Till they steer their loads o'er the harbour bar,
Where the crimson flag is flying,

THE CUPBOARD PAPERS.

X. THE RULER OF THE ROAST.

THE Ruler of the Roast lives in the Faubourg Pantagruel. Where else should he live, if not in that most bustling of Paris streets, which by some miraculous chance has not been fired, nor pulled down for barricade materials by the shirtless lovers of liberty, the begrimed advocates of equality, and the armed wranglers for fraternity? Here, then, Monsieur Tournebroke is lord paramount in a kingdom of geese, fowls, turkeys, rabbits, hares, and rows of joints of meat, that lie prone to his broad hands, and within reach of his twinkling eye. How artfully he has disposed them to the view of the troops of bargain-loving housewives and cooks who are passing by, intent on a cheap dinner! The square cuts of roast goose, the sections of fowl, veal, and beef, that are arranged upon a marble slab near the door, are flanked by ropes of partridges, and wreaths of larks. The thrush lies at hand, cased in fat, and ready for the spit. I see him too, next door, truffled, for fifteen sous, lying near partridges, showing "the diamond of the kitchen" through their skins, at a trifle under four francs each. The rabbits and hares have not a pleasant look, so we travel to the lines of capons and turkeys, the beaks of which just escape the white cap of proud Monsieur Tournebroke, as he passes outward from his two or three yards of fire to get a little fresh air, and present his handsome person to the gaze of the faubourg.

He glances to the right and left, and sees

that a brisk business is going forward. The vegetable barrows are passing along, mostly governed by women, who are as clean and self-respecting as the traders in the shops, let me observe by the way. The cauliflowers are going off at a tremendous rate to-day; and some small fresh herrings, in the oddest little fishmonger's (the corner of an Auvergnat's wood and coke store), laid out upon fresh ferns, are fought for at one or two sous each. A gaunt lady stands at the grocer's corner before two baskets of snails; and by the grocer's threshold is an open tub of olives, at about sixpence the half kilogramme. That must be a good Auvergnat at his door, with one little section of his black shop given up to an old fishwoman, and just room for a chair and a board at the other corner yielded to a girl who is selling violets. Violets in November—and in plenty. The little bunches are stuck in the bosoms of the work-girls who are out marketing; and at Montmartre, poor Theophile Gautier's fresh grave was covered with them this morning. Grapes, apples, and pears are selling by the pound. You may tell how many the very thrifty ménagère is marketing for, by the number of apples she buys. It is a copper market essentially. Only on the flaming and fragrant premises of Monsieur Tournebroke is a five-franc note seen, when a roast fowl is carried off for a family feast.

The little domestic dinner-market, to which I was introduced by my good friend Madame Barbizon,* was but a hole-and-corner market of a very rough description; but where Monsieur Tournebroke figures, the most Parisian of the Parisians are located. It is the centre of the theatrical population, of the commercial classes, of the dealers in, and makers of, the articles de Paris. As I turned the corner I recognised groups of actors and actresses of the third class; the supreme lady of the Eldorado, the comic singer of the Champs Elysées; thrifty folk, most of them, who will pick up a dainty dinner in penny-worths along the faubourg presently, and be queens and redoubtable chiefs after a quarter of one of Monsieur Tournebroke's poulets, eaten within sight of the spits. Yonder poor, clean-faced actor has just bought a little bunch of black grapes at a barrow; and in his pocket he has a paper of sardines, and another of galantine. He will buy a sou dinner-roll, and then, in his

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. ix., p. 11.

little room up on the fifth floor, he will gaily prepare to be the grand homme at the circus at nine o'clock, for it is he who so closely resembles the hero of Austerlitz. This is the way all this bustling crowd lives from day to day. Clerks of the Marais and of the Faubourg Montmartre; their wives who do a little humble work quietly in their rooms; poor art manufacturers, who can just employ a man and a boy to help them; small tradesmen of all descriptions; designers of fans and patterns, and painters on china—all are to be seen arranging and picking up their menus as they pass along. What variety of living they enjoy! The marchands des quatre saisons are truly representative dealers, and bring spring and summer, and autumn and winter to them, in all the fruits and growths of these seasons. It is not only the diners at the gilded restaurants, nor the inhabitants of fashionable Paris, who know what green almonds, wild strawberries, peaches and apricots, melons and green figs, grapes and artichokes, tomatoes and salsifis, cardons and aubergines, mean. All these pass along the Faubourg Pantagruel, and few are the wives, or masters, or journeymen, or artists who buy beyond their means.

Monsieur Tournebroke is not a giver of credit, and this is no eccentricity or sternness of character in his case. Credit is not an idea that is common in the faubourg. One reason why this daily dinner-market exists is that the buyers will not have credit. What they want, and are determined to have, is their full money's worth, and this is not to be had unless you have the money in hand. The villainous money-lender of the poor, who thrives in the low quarters of London and Liverpool, will find no kindred rascal here. The poor are many, as you may see, when they are buying the six-sous square of veal, the leek, and the salad for their dinner; as you may discern when they are at the barrière guinguettes, where they may dine for three or five sous; there are the pauvres honteux, and the assistés, who are on the books of their bureau de bienveillance; but none of these are the victims of the usurer. None have had their beds taken from them under a bill of sale; none have been thrown upon the streets by a loan at sixty per cent. If such loan offices existed in the little streets which run east and west from the faubourg, and the laws were as cruel and purblind as those of England in regard to small debts, you would not wait long before you observed the evil effects of

leaving poor folk at the mercy of the usurer. As the case stands here, among these needy purchasers there is no extravagance, because extravagance is impossible. The poor man who is in a place where ready money is the strict rule is a very fortunate, if he be a thoroughly thrifty man. And if he be not thrifty in the beginning, the ready-money system will teach him to be so in a few rough lessons. Set up a tally-shop in the midst of the dealers of the Faubourg Pantagruel, and lay before these bustling housewives, who have the shrewdest sense of the value of every centime of their money, the system on which the English tally-man proceeds to undermine the workman's house, and the faubourg would not be long in stoning the adventurer's shop-front. In short, apply English debtor and creditor laws, and particularly those of the county courts, to this busiest bit of Paris, and the result would be the destruction of the trade in dinners which now proceeds on the best terms between buyer and seller. At present the faubourg is a mighty cupboard, a busy, ready-money larder some half mile in length. It stretches from the Boulevard Magenta to the Porte St. Denis, and the whole length of it exhibits in a hundred forms the ingenuity of food traders catering for a tasteful, orderly, saving race.

Monsieur Tournebroke's I take to be the most economical establishment in the market, albeit it is the most aristocratic and pretentious as to appointments. Half the premises are a long kitchen, and half a fairly appointed restaurant. Along part of one side of the kitchen, where the mighty fires blaze, are rows of benches and bare tables, at which humble diners can consume the dishes they have bought on the spot for a few sous. The front, towards the window, must be the frontispiece to the book, should any knowing pen ever write the history of Monsieur Tournebroke's establishment.

There lived at Antwerp, in the opening years of the seventeenth century, one Francis Snyders, who could have done justice to the splendour of the picture Monsieur Tournebroke turns daily to his admiring quartier. The leading incident or interest of the picture is a basket of the finest fruit of the season. Here are rosy apples, bunches of grapes, thrown as though the autumn breeze had cast them there; the deep red cherry, hillocks of wild strawberries, half hidden in ferns, with melons for sentinels, then the deep neutral

tint of the black radish, the delicate whites and greens of cauliflower, celery, chicory, or escarolle, warmed with young carrot bunches, or strongly relieved by beet, bulbous and ruby as Bardolph's nose. The deeper greens near the outer circle are supplied by cabbage and spinach, prepared and cleansed as they should be, ready for the cook, the cooler corners lightened by creams of St. Gervais or elsewhere. And then had rich picture ever a more glorious framework than that of the capons of Mans, of pendent hares, of festoons of larks, and sentinels of turkeys drawn up in a severe row in front? He who painted at Antwerp the picture, with lobster for central interest (an honour Homard owes obviously to his colour), in which asparagus, pigeons, snipe, and artichokes are thrown together with a master's witchery, would have done justice to the taste of Monsieur Tournebroche. Either Francis Snyders was before his time, or Monsieur Tournebroche should have been his contemporary in Antwerp.

Peeping through the doorway, I see the benches crammed with diners, the fires blistering and browning scores of birds, while attendants empty soup from cans into plates. Monsieur Tournebroche, in spotless white, is chief figure of the scene, and when he has to bargain with a lady about one of his birds on the spit, his gallantry is of a superb kind. Near the open doors are marble tables, upon which are ranged sections of goose, capon, duck, turkey, and veal, and over each table the prices—forty centimes, fifty centimes, up to eighty centimes—are marked in enamelled letters. At each table there is a long bright fork for the use of customers. Each customer, as he approaches the table bearing the price he is prepared to give, takes up the fork, and, with much deliberation and knowingness, selects his morsel. At the opposite side of the tables is a buxom girl, in snowy bib and sleeves, who is ready to wrap the chosen piece in fine white paper, tie it as a parcel, leaving a loop to the string, by which the purchaser can carry it home. Mrs. Bolt and all the genteel society of Chalkstone will be indeed astonished if their husbands should ever lead their formal steps to the Quartier Pantagruel, to see the outwardly "highly respectable people" who lift Monsieur Tournebroche's choosing-forks. Gentlemen perfectly gloved, ladies who have servants and children with them—I am almost prepared to say very many people

who would "look down" upon the Bolts—are among the patrons of Monsieur Tournebroche.

I had the honour and pleasure of taking Mr. Bloomsbury Baker the length of my quartier, in order to have the advantage of his opinion on its superiority over everything in the way of prompt dinner-buying in London.

"See," said I, directing him to every item as we passed along. "Specialité de déjeuners! That man deals in breakfasts only—Rabelaisian breakfasts for a few pence. Look at this little cheese shop, with the Limbourgs, Bries, cut into, say, twopennyworths; then at this charcutier's; why the variety is extraordinary, from the delightful hure aux pistaches to the humble boudins de Nancy. Opposite, see, they are turning out the cakes from the ovens, almost into the streets—frangipanne, galette, gauffres. And now glance here. They are making pancakes in the doorway. A little charcoal under the flat pan, two or three dabs of butter, large flat spade to turn it, and in a few minutes it is done. The girl who cooks the cakes with the speed of lightning sells them at the same pace. There is a crowd round her. She whips up the pancake, dredges it with sugar, folds it in white paper, delivers it and receives the money in an instant."

"Egad!" Mr. Baker exclaimed, "it would do for a conjuror's trick in England."

"Here, see, is a row of the famous red and white haricots in sacks; the olive, sardine, and herring tubs. And now let us turn into the restaurant department of Monsieur Tournebroche's fiery realms, and rob his spit of a capon."

We had a dinner of goujons de Seine, finely fried with parsley; a capon that had the heat bubbles upon its bosom when placed before us; and an omelette—all perfect. Monsieur Tournebroche proved himself, to our minds that evening, a born genius.

Twirling his glass of burgundy before him, and dusting the table to make room for his impressive elbows, Mr. Bloomsbury Baker said:

"My very dear Fin-Bec, this is very admirable, very admirable indeed, I may say; but permit me to assure you that it would not do in England. It would not suit the Saxon. I have eaten caviar at Moscow, macaroni at Naples, in short the thing to be eaten in most parts of the world, and I have come to the conclusion that no good

will ever be done by trying to make the Latin like what the Saxon swallows. This Faubourg Pantagruel would, in London, be rows of shambles—something like Tottenham-court-road on a Saturday night. Your friend Tournebroche, if an Englishman, would not be the artist he is, but the keeper of a mere cook-shop. And you would have a public-house at the corner of every street in the quartier; and the people would run accounts with the grocer and the baker; and, in fact, that which is a picture, an evidence of taste and economy and sobriety, here, would be a nuisance there."

"You mean, surely, my dear Baker, that these differences exist—not that they must continue to exist; or that the example and teaching of our friend Tournebroche in England would be useless."

"I mean that this quartier belongs to Paris as much as Drury-lane belongs to London. The habits of one race cannot be got into the blood of another. We grow beer and our neighbours burgundy; and I suppose we shall go on doing so to the end of time. Think over your own experience. Our countrymen travel through the vineyards, but they return home only to rejoice the more heartily in the hop-grounds. This burgundy has the sparkle of the Latin eye; beer has the hard clear look of the Teuton blue. It must be so always, my dear Fin-Bec."

"I am sorry to hear a travelled man like you say so," was my observation to my stout Briton. "You remind me of Mr. Boltt."

"Of Mr. Boltt!" exclaimed Baker. "The most prejudiced, pig-headed fellow I ever had the misfortune of knowing! I remind you of Boltt! My dear friend, why not say of that shadow of his they call Reginald, at once? Yes, say I remind you of that insipid bundle of insular prejudices!"

The waiter brought me the bill at this moment, and we were in a hurry, and I was glad of it; because Baker did at that moment remind me of Boltt, and of the worst side of Boltt into the bargain.

XI. THE QUEEN OF SKIRTS.

It was the brigham of an English princess—from the Hôtel Bristol—that drove away from Madame Rosalie's door, as we turned the corner, I and Petit-Bec, on a message to the Queen of Skirts. We were not to be too angry, but we were to be firm. The dress was to be home without fail by six that evening, for madame was dining en ville, and she had at least a league to

travel, and—there were many more and interspersed with threats of displeasure, appeals as an old and good customer, and references to promises already broken. But we came away in a few minutes beaten at all points; and thoroughly convinced, not only that Madame Rosalie had broken no promises, and that she had no reason to be grateful to an old customer; but that it was very good indeed of her to promise that the dress should be forthcoming in time for dinner. The princess had come away smiling. No person, whether princess, bourgeoisie, or workwoman, went into those rooms of carpet, lace, silk, and mirrors, who did not issue beaming, and in a thoroughly pleasant temper.

The Queen of Skirts might have been the queen of millions of gallant men. Her grace, her ease, her self-command, her gracieuseté (we haven't the equivalent), her sparkling talk, her perfect ignorance that there was a shady side to the street, and her bewitching cleverness in twisting the tastes of all her clients to her own, were worthy of a wider empire than skirts, though I think some of hers would go far towards covering a German principality or two. How she must have laughed at your humble servant when he had got awkwardly out of her presence; for she knew quite well that I had been commissioned to scold her, and that she had beaten me before I had got the beginning of a reproach to my lips! She had a business of extraordinary value; she charged the most extravagant prices; she gave credit boldly directly she knew that she had to deal with people of good family; she disdained her rich vulgar customers because she was an artist, and she knew that upon their shoulders her works would never travel where they would be justly appreciated; she was a lady of prodigious activity, who never appeared to be in a hurry; and, in addition to being one of the leading grandes couturières of her day, was a most domestic wife and mother. The Queen of Skirts was well read, be it understood; of good birth, and accustomed to polite society. No doubt the female beggars on horseback—they are the fiercest and noisiest of the Row—who ordered dresses in the boudoirs of Madame Rosalie, talked of her as a person who gave herself airs, and called herself Rosalie, because her proper name was Petit or Chose. But their disdain could never reach the height of her scorn. She would declare, with majestic earnestness, that she made dresses for many clients

whom she would not honour with her company to dinner.

Now the Queen of Skirts had more reasons for her pride than many of her clients could boast. She was, in her way, the heroine of a romance; brave as the colonel of cuirassiers who was her wedded lord and master. Some genteel readers start. But this is a true bit of life, enacted within the range of my own experience, that I have the honour to submit. When Captain De Larive married he had fair prospects. He was in a regiment of cuirassiers; he had distinguished himself in the Crimea; and his advancement was certain. Moreover, he had good expectations. His father was a man of fair property in Burgundy. Madame De Larive had only a small dowry. Her family had been unfortunate through the escapades of her brothers. But she must, when the captain married her, have been the perfect type of a pretty Frenchwoman. The marriage was a romantic love match, over which many wise heads were shaken among the vineyards that encompassed her home. But the young people lived together in the most provoking felicity. They persisted obstinately in their happiness. The wise heads kept shaking among the paternal vineyards, and muttering words of pity over the poor captain who would not take his arm away from his wife's waist. The wise heads shook away until old De Larive died; and then they requested to be thanked and complimented for the years they had spent in warning the young couple that they would not be happy. Old De Larive had contrived to waste his substance, and to hide his roguery till his death. Captain De Larive, having dutifully accompanied his parent to the field of rest, returned to the house in which he was born, only to learn that it was not his.

It is impossible to say what noisy words would have escaped the son's lips, so vexed was he for Rosalie's sake, had not a little hand been opportunely pressed upon his superb moustache, closing his lips.

"Not a word, Hector," said Rosalie. "Not a word."

"What!" shouted the soldier; and this time two little hands were pressed upon the cuirassier's mouth.

"Silence," cried the wife, "if you love me. We have been, we still can be, happy without it. And, some day, you would grieve over every word said in anger about the father whom you have just laid in his grave. Come away."

They went away, the wise heads wagging after them. What would become of them? What would become of their poor dear children—and there were twins! Yes; Madame De Larive had bestowed twins upon her lord and master.

The pay of captain of cuirassiers in the French army will not keep a family, and permit savings for the future of the children. There was Rosalie's modest dowry, it was true; but Rosalie had three babies, with every hope of a fourth before the next New Year's Day. While the future was under deliberation a Bourse friend presented to Captain De Larive a magnificent affair, that would treble the little dowry in a few months. Rosalie entered into the delightful plan with her husband, and six months afterwards her capital had disappeared into the pockets of the Bourse schemers. There was now not a five-franc piece for the little ones.

Whereupon Madame De Larive announced to her brave cuirassier that she had an idea. Was she not clever with her toilette? There never was a more wonderful contriver. Hadn't she just a little taste? Her taste was the talk of all their friends, and her opinion was law everywhere. Had she not a head for accounts and management? She could manage the bank of France.

Having elicited these verdicts from her husband (who had not many ideas of his own, ideas not being part of the baggage of heavy cavalry), Rosalie laid down that proposition which landed her in boudoirs of silk and lace, as one of the grand *couturières* of Paris. She reasoned, it seems, in this way. Her children must have a little fortune to begin the world with. A girl must have a dot; it is as much a part of her entry into life as a new dress. No parents in France, unless of the very poorest and most vicious description, leave a girl portionless. "Our *concierge*," said Madame Rosalie, "lays up a thousand or so for her girl."

And so the brave little lady, seeing her husband's fortune dissipated, and her own lost in an unfortunate adventure, turned dressmaker. She was too proud to paint her husband's name at her doorway; she would not put him at a disadvantage in the world. He kept his military position, wore his stars of the Legion and his Crimean medals as proudly as ever, and left to join his regiment, rejoicing her whenever he could get a holiday. Or when she could snatch a few hours from business,

she repaired in all haste to the town where his regiment was quartered. These meetings were the happy holidays for which the Queen of Skirts was perpetually scheming. Many a pretentious gentleman hoped to flirt with the couturière. She received bouquets, she found tender letters addressed to her, she saw rude eyes directed to her, while she worked away for the benefit of the children. She threw flowers into the fire, or gave them to her workfolk, destroyed the letters, and shamed the rude eyes with her honest face.

During a few years of her career the Queen of Skirts was perfectly happy. Her husband had a staff appointment that kept him in Paris, that is, by Vincennes. Here they hired a house, and furnished it, as only Rosalie could furnish a house of six or seven rooms. Nobody ever explained how she did it, but while she conducted the fashionable business of Madame Rosalie, and listened to the whims of half the princesses in Paris; while she designed toilettes, received customers, and directed more than a score of workwomen; she was a model little housewife at Vincennes. When her husband asked brother officers to dinner she prepared the menu, kept a hand of authority on the cook, and always managed to get home in time to dress for dinner, and present herself to the captain's guests. She confessed that she was very tired sometimes, and could hardly eat; but her courage never failed her, and she never allowed anything to fall out of its proper order. Each day was mapped out while she took her morning coffee, even to the minutest details. It was on her domestic arrangements she prided herself more than on the prodigious growth of her business. The business came easily, because the Queen of Skirts could fascinate a duchess. Every customer went away from her boudoirs resolved to recommend her in all directions. Customers who had no orders to give, would go to pass half an hour with Madame Rosalie, and see all the new robes her clever hand had put together. One English princess was sent to her by a German duchess, and the princess sent her sister a few months later.

Observe how complete was Madame Rosalie's views of her duties as wife and mother. She told Madame Fin-Bec that she would not have engaged in the dress-making had the business compelled her to neglect her husband and children; that is, their home comforts. Her success impelled her to watch herself closely, lest

she should pass negligently over even one of her household duties. And this was a fashionable French dressmaker!

The war came. It struck her cruelly at home, and in business. Husband ordered off to the German frontier, to begin with; business suddenly closed. Not a customer came after the first reverse. Not a stitch was set after the 4th of September, when the leading lawyers of Paris proved themselves true inheritors of the ingratitude and baseness of the morrow of Waterloo. Madame Rosalie was left alone in the city, on which the Prussians were advancing. Her children had been sent to Bordeaux, and thither, with a sad heart, the heroine who had been slaving for them, followed. Fortune smiled upon the Queen of Skirts when the fortunes of war bore Hector De Larive's cuirassiers to the banks of the Loire, and so presently gave the warrior husband, as she said, absolutely black as an Auvergnat, to her arms.

The end of the war came, but before the end Hector's valour had won for him the colonelcy of his regiment. Let the reader bear in mind that this is a story true in every particular I am telling him; and I am telling it to him as one of my Cupboard Papers, because the Queen of Skirts appears to me to combine in her little body all the best points of an educated Frenchwoman. For she finds time to read, as well as to design new costumes, and look after the colonel's house and guests. Moreover she is not at a loss, should her husband return home late, to make an excellent supper for him in a few minutes. The Queen of Skirts, to tell the truth, wields a pretty little fourchette of her own, and has given me two or three valuable hints. She will talk on this subject, with mountains of gorgeous dresses lying upon chairs around her, in the prettiest way. When she expects her husband, or has two of her children with her, she is in the highest spirits. We came upon her—it was only a little matter of a walking toilette—one day some four months after the Versailles had got the better of the Communists. She was putting her house in order, slowly, wondering whether all her old customers would come round her again. The welcome we received was genuine, not for the robe's sake—the Queen of Skirts has a soul above that—but from good heart and gratitude, to see that the Terrible Year had not blotted her out of our minds.

Her description of her Année Terrible was the most perfect thing from beginning to

end it is possible to conceive. The charming interpolations, the delicious addenda, the witty asides and by-the-ways, gave a wonderful sparkle to the vivid descriptive passages. She had been, I could see, as brave through all the terrors and scenes of horror as she was when she sat on her husband's knee on the morrow of their ruin, and told him how she would build up his house again, and even provide for the twins!

"He returns to-night," she said, her face beaming, while she touched and re-touched the lace and folds of a dress at hand. "Yes, to-night; and just as you came I was thinking over the colonel's supper. You know he is a little particular in these things."

"And madame also," I ventured to observe.

"You want to tease me," said the Queen of Skirts. "Well, I own, perhaps I am a little gourmande. Now, you shall tell me whether you think I have done well. But first remember that I have to do all myself. I keep nobody up. I have the supper laid in my little boudoir, and we wait upon ourselves, or rather, I do the waiting. I have arranged so that we shall have some Marennes oysters; then I have a partridge, a terrine, and—well, a meringue. With that he will not die of hunger."

"Nor of indigestion," said I.

"It is easily done, and it gives him pleasure," the little woman rattled on. "Many a day and many a night, when he has been able to see me for a few hours in the war-time, I have been able to surprise him with a little dinner or a little supper. Greater gourmets than he pretends to be have praised my mayonnaise, I assure you. In the war-time we found a dinner when others were in despair. We were in a wretched little place, but I would have order in my house, absolutely the same as you see it here in my business."

With all this let me note that the Queen of Skirts kept very good society. She had her place as wife of a colonel of a distinguished regiment, and she well knew how to hold it. Think of it. She could make a pudding and something more; she could keep a household with strict economy; she could manage a most difficult business; and she could find the time to be one of the most agreeable women at any moment—with leisure to prattle about the news of the day. She was of the same race, let the reader observe, as Celestine, my cook. The same orderly, prudent mind, but graced

with education, refined by nature and by culture. Was it likely that Madame De Larive would allow her daughters to grow up portionless in a country where the suitor of her cook expects a dot with her?

THE YELLOW FLAG.

By EDMUND YATES,

AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "NOBODY'S FORTUNE," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XI. RECOMPENSE.

THE next morning, at about twelve o'clock, Martin Gurwood arrived in Polington-terrace, and found Alice alone in the drawing-room.

"I came especially to see you," he said, after the first greeting, "and yet I scarcely expected to find you had left your room so early. Yesterday was a day of severe trial to you, dear Mrs. Claxton, but you seem to have gone through it bravely."

"If I did," said Alice, with a half-mournful smile, "I think it must have been owing to my pride. I did not know I possessed any of that quality until there came occasion for its display. But I suffered dreadfully from reaction during the night, and was as low and as hysterical as my worst enemy could wish me."

"But that feeling has passed away now?"

"Oh yes; with the morning light came brighter thoughts and better sense; and when your name was announced, I was thinking seasonably enough, as it seemed to me, of the mercy of Providence in giving me such kind friends in the midst of my affliction."

"I am glad to find you in this frame of mind, dear Mrs. Claxton, as I have come to talk to you on a subject which will require your particular attention."

His voice faltered as he spoke, and the colour forsook her cheeks as she listened to him.

"My particular attention," she repeated, with a forced smile. "It must be something serious, then."

"It is serious, but not, I hope, distasteful," said Martin. "I have been with Mr. Statham this morning. I went to him to give him the opportunity of speaking to me upon a matter which I knew he had most deeply at heart, and which must, sooner or later, have been broached by him."

He looked at her keenly, watching the effect of his words. Her face expressed

great interest, but no alarm, no regret. He was glad of that, he thought to himself.

"I was with Humphrey for an hour, and when I left him, I told him I should come straight to you. Mine is a strange errand, Alice"—it was perhaps the first time he had addressed her by her Christian name, and the word as spoken by him rang musically but mournfully on her ear—"a strange errand for a confirmed old bachelor!"

Alice started at the word.

"Yes," continued Martin, very pale, but striving hard to smile, and to command the inflexions of his voice, "it is the old story of people preaching what they never intend to practise. Dear Alice, Humphrey Statham loves you, and I am here to ask you to marry him?"

Bravely done, Martin, at last! Bravely done, though you were asking for what you knew was equivalent to your death-warrant; bravely spoken, without a break in your voice, though her dear eyes were fixed upon you, and you had taken into yours that little hand which you were urging her to bestow upon another.

Alice was motionless for a moment. Then she drew back, shuddering and crying, "I cannot, I cannot."

"Stay, Alice," said Martin, in his soft, soothing tone. "Humphrey Statham is a good man, and you owe him much. You know that I would not unnecessarily wound your feelings, dear Alice; but I must tell you that when we first discovered who you were, it was entirely owing to Humphrey Statham's chivalry, patience, and good sense that matters were arranged as they were, and that you were up to yesterday kept in ignorance of the fraud which had been practised on you. I, misinformed and bigoted as I was, had intended to take other steps, but I yielded to Humphrey's calm counsel. Ever since that hour, he has watched over your best interests with the keenest sympathy. Any comfort you have experienced is due to his fostering care and forethought, and so late as yesterday you yourself heard him plead your cause with eloquence, which was inspired by his affection for you."

He paused for a moment, and Alice spoke.

"It is not that," she said; "it is not that. I know all I owe to Mr. Statham; I have long since acknowledged to myself how kind and good he has been to me. But," she added, with downcast eyes and flushing cheeks, "how can I let a man like

that take me for his wife? He thinks he loves me now, and doubtless he does. He is not the man to be led away by his feelings, but the love of any man for me would be exposed to a worse trial than that of time or use. Could Mr. Statham bear to know that the world was talking of his wife, to guess what it said? Is not the world filled with persons like Mr. Wetter, and should I not by marrying any honest man expose him to the sneers and gibes of such a crew? I could not do it! I would not do it!"

"There would be no question of that," said Martin Gurwood. "Recollect that your story in its minutest details is known to Mr. Statham, and that he is the last man in the world likely to act upon impulse, or without a calm analysis of the motives that prompt him. There is no one who can testify to this so strongly as myself, and I can declare to you solemnly that it was made clear to both of us long since how blameless you were, and how grievously you had been sinned against. Do not abide by that hastily-spoken decision, Alice, I beseech you. Think of what a noble fellow Humphrey is; recollect how true and steadfast, and triumphant has been his advocacy of your cause; recollect that he is no longer young, and that on your reply to the question I have put to you hangs the hope of his future life."

Bravely spoken, Martin! The work of expiation progresses nobly now!

Alice was silent for a moment. Then she said, "If I could think this——"

"Think it, believe it, rely on it! Standing to you in the relation which was half self-assumed, half imposed upon me by the force of circumstances; loving you, as I do, with a brotherly regard" (his voice faltered for an instant here; but he quickly regained its command), "I could not be blinded in a matter in which your future happiness is involved, even by my affection for Humphrey Statham. Hearing this, you need have no further fear. See, Alice, I may go back to Humphrey and make him happy, may I not? I may tell him, at least, that there is hope?"

Again a pause. Then the low but clear reply:

"You may."

"God bless you, dear, for those words!" said Martin, bending down and touching her forehead with his lips. "They will give new life to the noblest fellow in the world!" Then, as he drew back, he muttered, "It is all over now."

"And you," said Alice, laying her hand gently on his arm, "you spoke of yourself just now as a confirmed bachelor; but I have had other hopes for you."

"What do you mean?" he cried.

"Women's eyes are quick in such matters," she said. "Have you been too absorbed to perceive that there is one by whom your every movement is watched, your every thought anticipated? one for whose first proofs of kindness to me I was indebted to the interest she takes in you? one who——"

"I think you must be mistaken, my dear Alice," said Martin, coldly. "It has been ordained that my life is to be celibate and solitary; and what pleasure I am to have is to be derived from the contemplation of your happiness. So be it; I accept my fate. Now I must hasten back to Humphrey with the good news."

He kissed her forehead again, and left the room. As he passed down the stairs, he saw through the open door Pauline seated at the table in the dining-room writing. She looked up at his approach; and though he had intended going straight out he could not resist her implied invitation to speak to her.

"After all, it will be better so," he said to himself.

"I thought you would be here this morning, Monsieur Martin," said Pauline, timidly. "You have seen Alice, and you find her better than we could have hoped for, do you not?"

"Yes," said Martin, "I certainly found her better; but it was my good fortune to be the bearer of some news to her which I think has left her better still."

The idea which had haunted her previously—was it true? had he come to make the announcement?

"You the bearer of news?" she asked in tremulous tones.

"Yes," he replied, cheerily; "good news for Alice, and news in which you, dear Mrs. Durham, will consequently rejoice. There is every reason that you, who have been so faithful to the trust reposed in you, so staunch a friend to us all, should be the first to hear it. Alice is going to be married to Humphrey Statham."

The tension of suspense had been so great that Pauline had scarcely strength to express her delight.

"Yes," said Martin, speaking slowly and with emphasis, but purposely averting his eyes from his companion. "It is a great blessing to me to know that two persons

whom I love so dearly will be happy. I dare say it seems strange to other persons, and indeed it does sometimes to myself, to think that I, who am a confirmed bachelor, and who from very early youth determined to lead a single life, can take interest in settling the domestic matters of my friends. But in this instance, at least, I take the greatest interest; and I am sure that you will have the good sense to understand and appreciate my motive."

"You pay me a great compliment by saying so, Monsieur Martin," said Pauline in a low constrained voice. Then, after a little pause, she asked, "Have you five minutes to spare, Monsieur Martin, while I talk to you about myself?"

"Certainly," said Martin; "I was on my way to Humphrey with the news."

"It is good news, and he can wait for it five minutes. If it were bad, it would go to him quickly enough," said Pauline. "I will not detain you longer than the time I have mentioned. I told you I wanted to talk to you about myself; and the subject is therefore not one in which I take much pleasure, or, indeed, much interest."

"You should not speak so bitterly," said Martin, kindly. "There are two or three of us whose best regard you have won and retain."

"I did not mean to be bitter, Monsieur Martin," said Pauline, humbly. "I will put what I have to say in very few words. It will be obvious to you that the time has now arrived when the manner of my life must be again altered. Alice will find, or rather has found, a guardian better able to watch over and protect her; and my part, so far as she is concerned, is played out. You know all my story, Monsieur Martin, and you know human nature sufficiently well to recognise me as a woman of activity, and to be sure that it would be impossible for me to endure the nullity of this English life, in which I have no place; and now that Alice is safe, and going to be happy and respectable for ever, no occupation. I must be kept from thought, too, Monsieur Martin; from thinking of the past—you comprehend that."

"Not of the immediate past," he said gently. "Recollect what use you have been to us: how could we have done without you? It will be pleasant to you to recollect the services you have rendered to this poor girl: how by your aid, at that fearful time of trial in the house at Hendon, we were enabled to overcome the difficulties which arose, and which would

have been too much for us, but for your quickness and mother-wit. You will recollect how successfully you have watched over her here, and how her health has suffered but little comparatively from the dreaded shock under your skilful nursing and kind companionship. It will be pleasant to recal all these things, will it not, Pauline?"

"Yes," said Pauline, pondering; "but there is another portion of my past upon which I shall not cease to dwell. To prevent the thought of that coming over me, and striking sorrow and dismay into my soul, I must give up this dreamy, easy-going existence, and take to a life of action. I am not a strong-minded woman, Monsieur Martin; and God knows I do not pretend to have a mission, or any nonsense of that kind. There are not many positions for which I am fitted; some would be beyond my moral, others beyond my physical strength. But I must have a career of some sort; and away in France, among my compatriots, there are various means of honest industry for women such as are not to be found here."

"You intend to leave England, then?" asked Martin.

"Yes," said Pauline. "Why should I remain? As I said before, my part here is played out. Do you think it will be long before Alice is married?"

"I cannot say," said Martin. "No date has been mentioned; but if I am consulted, I shall advise that the marriage take place as soon as possible. There is no reason for delay; and for my own part, I am anxious to get home again."

"You will go back to your country parish?" asked Pauline.

"For a time, certainly," said Martin; "but my plans are indefinite."

"On the day of my sister-in-law's marriage, then, when I have placed her in her husband's hands, and thus satisfied myself that she has no further need of me, I shall bid her adieu, and shall go to France. And I have a request to make to you, Mr. Greenwood, in your position as Mr. Calverley's executor. You are aware that just before I came to reside in his house, I placed in his hands two thousand pounds, which he was good enough to invest for me. I shall now be glad if you will sell those securities, and let me have the money, for which I shall have a use about that time. Will you do so?"

"Certainly I will. But is there no chance of your altering your decision?"

"None. You think it is a right one, do you not?"

"It is a conscientious one, no doubt; but we shall all miss you very deeply."

Her earnest eyes were fixed upon him as he spoke. His words were fair, as he meant his tone to be hearty and regretful; but he was not clever enough to hide from her his unmistakable pleasure at her decision. She knew that he approved of her departure for Alice's sake, and, bitterest thought of all to her, felt it a relief for his own.

There was an awkward silence for some minutes. To break it, Martin remarked:

"You will be glad to hear that there is no danger of any further annoyance from Mr. Wetter. It appears that Humphrey saw him yesterday; and after what passed between them, he is perfectly satisfied that Mr. Wetter will not attempt any further interference."

"I am pleased to hear it," said Pauline, "but not surprised. Henrich Wetter was always a coward; barking loudly when suffered to run at large, but crouching and submissive directly the whip is shaken over him. No, Alice need fear him no more."

"One word more," said Martin, rising from his seat; "one last word, Madame Du Tertre—I shall always think of you by that name, which is very familiar and very pleasant to me—one last word before I take my leave. Can nothing more be done for you to help you in the life which you have chosen?"

Pauline looked at him steadily.

"Nothing," she replied.

"Recollect that, though I am but a poor country parson, Humphrey Statham is what may be called a rich man; and I am sure I am justified in speaking for him, and saying that any amount of money which you might require would be at your service."

Pauline shook her head.

"Money in my country, more especially in the southern provinces, where my lot will most probably be cast, goes much further than it does here; and what I have of my own will enable me not merely to live, but, as I trust, to do a certain amount of good to others. I am very grateful all the same, Monsieur Martin, for your generous offer."

"My generous offer," said Martin, "was simply proposing to acknowledge, in a very slight manner, the existence of a debt due to you by Alice's friends, which can never

be repaid. We will see later on if we cannot induce you to alter your decision."

"Yes," said Pauline, quietly, "we will see later on."

Then Martin Gurwood took his leave of her, and walked back to his hotel. It was nearly over now; he had almost completed his self-appointed task. So well had he performed his mission that Alice evidently had no idea of the sacrifice he was making in yielding her to his friend, no idea even that he had ever cared for her otherwise than as her guardian. That was proved by the manner in which she had hinted at her hope that he might find solace elsewhere. That was a strange notion too! Could it merely have arisen in Alice's imagination, or was there any real foundation for it? Had he been so absorbed in his infatuation about Alice as to have been blind to all else that was passing round him? He did not know; he could not say. If it was so, he had acted rightly and honestly in the course he had taken with Pauline. His infatuation for Alice! That was all over now: in his intemperate youth he had greatly erred, in his forlorn middle age was he not justly punished?

And while Martin was jostling through the crowd, Pauline sat with her eyes fixed upon the fire, her mind filled with cognate thoughts. To her also the end had come. What had given the relish in her early days had long since grown distasteful to her; and the hope that had proved the light of her later life had, after doubtful flickering, at length been rudely extinguished; and in the hearts both of Martin and Pauline there was the same dismal conscientiousness that they were justly punished for the misdeeds of their youth, and that their expiation was necessary and just.

Two months after the date of these occurrences, on a bright and balmy spring morning, at a little City church hiding away somewhere between enormous blocks of warehouses, Humphrey Statham and Alice were married.

Brave to the last, Martin Gurwood himself performed the service, reading it through with a strong manly voice, and imploring the blessing of Heaven on those concerned, with unaffected fervour.

When the ceremony was ended, and the bride and bridegroom had departed, Martin joined the one other person who had been present—Pauline.

"Your plans for leaving are matured?" he said.

"So far matured," she said, with a sad smile, "that the cab with my luggage is at the end of the street, and that when I leave this, I go on board the steamer."

"Indeed," said Martin. "Then you have taken farewell of Alice?"

"Yes; early this morning."

"And you have told her of your plans?"

"No, indeed, for they are as yet undecided; but I have told her that I will write and let her know them."

"Be sure that you do," said Martin, "for we are all of us deeply interested in you. I have brought you," he added, handing her a packet, "your own two thousand pounds. With them you will find two thousand pounds more—one thousand from Alice as your sister-in-law, one thousand from Humphrey as your dead husband's old friend. They bade me give you this with their united love, and hoped you would not shrink from accepting it."

Pauline's voice shook very much as she replied, "I will accept it certainly; I shall hope to find a good use for it."

"Of that I have no doubt," said Martin. They had reached the end of the street by this time, and found the luggage-laden cab in waiting. "Good-bye, Madame Du Tertre," said Martin, after he had handed her into the vehicle, "good-bye, and God bless you."

"Good-bye, Monsieur Martin," said Pauline, returning his hand-pressure, and looking for an instant straight into his eyes, "good-bye." Then when the cab had driven off, she threw up her hands and crying out passionately, "Adieu à jamais!" pulled her veil over her face and burst into a flood of tears.

CHAPTER XII. L'ENVOI.

AWAY in the pleasant village of Twickenham, at the end of a broad lane turning out of the high-road, stands, shut in by heavy iron gates and in the midst of a large and exquisitely-kept garden, a bluff, red-faced, square-built, old-fashioned house. From its windows you look across a broad level mead to the shining Thames, winding like a silver thread amongst the rich pasture-grounds, while from the tall elms, planted with forethought more than a century ago to serve as a screen against the north-east wind, comes the cawing of a colony of rooks, who there have established their head-quarters. Over all, house and garden, river and rookery, mead and landscape, there is an air of peace and prosperity, wealth and comfort, calm and

repose. Far away on the horizon a lowering grey cloud shows where the great metropolis seethes and smokes; but so far as freshness and pure air are concerned, you might be in the very heart of the country.

Creeping down the great staircase, and sliding along the broad open balustrade, comes a slim elegant little girl of about eight years old, who slips out, through the open dining-room window, and running across the garden to the iron gates, peers long and earnestly down the lane. The little girl is disappointed apparently, for when she turns away, she walks soberly back to the house, and stationing herself at the bottom of the staircase, calls out, "There is no sign of him yet, papa!"

"Well," cries a cheery voice from the upper floor, "there's plenty of time for him to come yet, little Bell! you are such an impatient little woman." And with these words, Humphrey Statham walks out on to the landing in his dressing-gown, and with a book in his hand.

Three years have passed away since the occurrences narrated in the last chapter. They have left but little mark on our old friend; he is a little more bald, perhaps, and there are, here and there, patches of grey in the roots of his crisp beard, but his eyes are as bright and his manner as cheery as ever.

"You are such an impatient little woman," he repeated, pulling the child towards him and kissing her forehead.

"No, I am not," said Bell; "not impatient generally, pappy, only I want to see the gentleman, and you never will talk to me when you've got a book in your hand."

"Between you and your mamma, what is one to do?" said Humphrey Statham, laughing. "Mamma wants me to read to her, you want me to play with you, and it is impossible to please both at the same time."

"We both want you, because we're both so fond of you, pappy darling," said Bell, putting up her face again to be kissed, "and you ought to be pleased at that. There, I declare then I did hear wheels." And the child breaks away from Humphrey's grasp, and again rushes to the gate.

She is right this time. A fly is driving away, and the gentleman who has alighted from it stands waiting for admittance. A man with a thin face, clean-cut features, and light hair, dressed entirely in black and with a deep mourning band round his

hat. He started violently at the sight of the child, but recovered himself with an effort.

"You are little Bell?" he said, putting out his hand.

"Yes," she replied, sliding her little fingers into his, and looking up fearlessly into his face. "I am little Bell, and you are Mr. Gurwood. I know you! Papa and mamma have been expecting you, oh, ever so long."

The child pulled him gently towards the house, and he had scarcely crossed the threshold when he was seized in Humphrey Statham's hearty grasp.

"Martin, my dear old friend—at last. We thought you would never come, we have waited for you so long."

"So Bell tells me," said Martin, returning his friend's pressure; "but you see here I am. You're not looking a bit changed, Humphrey! And your wife?"

"Alice! Here she is to answer for herself."

Yes, she was there, more lovely than ever, Martin thought, in the mellowed rounded beauty of her form, and with the innocent trusting expression in her eyes still unchanged.

Let us, unseen by them, stand by the two old friends as they sit that evening over their wine, in the broad bay-window looking towards the sunset, and from their conversation glean our final records.

"And you are very happy, Humphrey?" asked Martin.

"Happy!" cried Humphrey Statham; "my dear Martin, I never knew what happiness was before. I rather think," he continued, with a smile, "that laziness may have something to do with it. You see, Alice doesn't care much about my being absent for the whole of the day, as I should necessarily be if I attended strictly to business; and as, living as we do, I do not spend anything like my income, I have knocked off City work to a certain extent, and leave the business in Mr. Collins's charge. He sees how matters are tending, and has made overtures to buy it, and shortly I shall let him have it to himself, I suppose. Not that my life is wholly objectless; there's the garden to look after, and Bell's education to superintend, and Alice to be read to; and then at night I potter away at a book on Maritime Law, which I am compiling, so that I find the twenty-four hours almost too short for what I have to do."

"And Alice?"

"I think that I may say she is perfectly happy. I have not a thought which she does not share, not a wish which is not inspired by her."

"And little Bell? what a charming child she has grown to be. To go back, Humphrey, for the first and only time to that conversation which we had in your chambers, I may say that circumstanced as I am in regard to that child, I was delighted to notice the fancy she seemed to take to me to-day."

"Curiously enough she has had from the first mention of your name an odd interest about you, and has frequently asked when you were coming to see us."

"Does—does Alice know anything about that story?"

"Only so far as I am concerned. I told her of my early attachment to Emily Mitchell, and the story of how I lost her; but she has not the least idea of Emily's further career beyond the fact that Bell is Emily's child."

"True to the last, true as steel," said Martin Gurwood, grasping his friend's hand.

"And now tell me of yourself, Martin," said Humphrey Statham; "what you are doing, what are your plans?"

"It is soon told," said Martin Gurwood: "I wrote you of my poor mother's death, and told you that she died without making any will. I am consequently her sole heir, and am a very rich man. The money is no good to me, Humphrey, but it will be a fine portion for little Bell, whom I have made my heiress under your guardianship."

"Time enough to think of that, Martin. What do you intend to do now?"

"To work, old friend, according to my lights, in striving to better the condition of my fellow men. Yesterday I resigned the vicarage of Lullington, and——"

"You don't mean to say you are going to become a missionary?"

"Not as you seem to suspect," said Martin, with a smile, "among savages and cannibals, but among those who perhaps need it not less, the lower classes of London. In striving to do them good, I purpose to spend my life and my income, and it will need but a very moderate amount of success to convince me that I have done rightly."

"It is not for me to quarrel with the decision, Martin," said Humphrey Statham; "it is boldly conceived, and I know will

be thoroughly carried out. And it will be moreover a satisfaction to me and to Alice to know that the scene of your labours is so close to us. When you want temporary rest and change, you will find your home here. You know that there is no one in the wide world whom it would give my wife and myself so much pleasure to welcome."

"I know it," said Martin, "and have my greatest pleasure in knowing it. Now tell me, Humphrey, has anything ever been heard of Madame Du Tertre, or of Pauline?"

"Nothing," replied Humphrey Statham, shaking his head; "as you know, she promised to write to us to tell us of her plans, but she has never done so, and that, I think, is the one grief of Alice's life. Pauline was so true a friend to my wife at a time when she most needed such a friend, that she was most desirous to hear of her again. But it seems as though that were not to be; her name is one of those which are 'writ in water.'"

One more look around ere the curtain falls. See Alice adored by her husband, happy and contented, with all the troubles of the past obliterated. See Humphrey Statham devoted to his wife, and finding in her love a recompense for the havoc and the tempest which destroyed his early hope. See Martin Gurwood labouring manfully, steadfastly, among the London poor, inculcating, both by precept and example, the doctrine, to the setting forth of which he has devoted his life. See him making occasional holiday with his old friends, and watching over the growth and education of little Bell; thinking of the providence which has endowed this girl so nobly by the hands of the two men who made the story of her mother's life; how sheltered she is, how safe from the terrible temptations which come to women with poverty and friendlessness; how the Yellow Flag will never flaunt over her beautiful head, a taunt and a warning.

END OF THE YELLOW FLAG.

Next week will be commenced a short Serial Story, entitled

NOTES OR GOLD?

By the Author of "Never Forgotten," "Fatal Zero," &c.

On the 16th of December will be published the
**EXTRA DOUBLE NUMBER FOR
CHRISTMAS, 1872,**

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DOOM'S DAY CAMP.

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